

By: Keith Kaczmarek November 2, 2011 [Link](#)

Kevin McCarthy, Republican congressman and majority whip for the House of Representatives, attended the Kern County Vision 2061 event at Bakersfield College that was being held in order to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of the Kern County Water Agency.

His speech took place after a free luncheon and focused on water issues facing Kern County.

"Our biggest challenges are our growing population, government regulation, and litigation," he said, referring to the challenges the water agency has had over the controversial restrictions put in place by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in order to protect an endangered species of fish called the "delta smelt."

The regulations kept billions of gallons of water in the Sacramento River from being diverted to farms and instead returned them to the briny marshes in the San Francisco Bay, the habitat for the delta smelt.

The decision to protect the delta smelt was so controversial among valley farmers that it led to a lawsuit that was recently decided in their favor.

The judge's opinion, as reported in the New York Times, even went so far as to personally attack the scientists working for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Courts only look to shortsightedness," McCarthy said.

When talking about the challenges facing the water agency, McCarthy also referred to the late Steve Job's famous saying of "I don't want to hear 'no,' I want solutions," but tempered this statement with a comment that "no one gets everything."

He outlined the challenges facing the water agency as "the direct result of Delta environmentalism," even going so far as to call for the removal of the scientists working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Getting the best science and making the best decisions does not fall along party lines," he said.

"We cannot ignore the issue of needing water flowing through the Delta."

His speech also emphasized the role of the Tenth Amendment of the Constitution, citing it as a justification for states to be free from federal regulation on the environment.

McCarthy concluded his speech by praising the Kern County Water Agency.

"This agency deserves more credit than they get."

After the event, McCarthy emphasized the importance of getting the best science. "Science is the great equalizer," he said, noting the role it has on both legislation and litigation.

McCarthy also felt that conferences such as the Vision 2061 event held by the Kern County Water Agency was the best way to resolve conflicts of interest between local, state, and federal interests concerning water issues.

The Vision 2061 event featured a variety of panels and offered such speakers as Democrat Rep. Jim Costa, Republican Sen. Jean Fuller, and Republican Assemblywoman Shannon Grove, as well as various directors and other officials from the Kern County Water Agency who led panels on water issues facing the Kern County Water Agency currently and in the future.

